Dick Smith Electronics Pty Ltd

# COMPUT

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## Since the last "Compūt" Dick Smith Electronics Pty Ltd., has really been active in the search for new computer products. Four new systems have been released:

*DSE Computer Specialists receiving training from Olivetti*

# 1. OLIVETTI

The new flagship of the Dick Smith Eletronics computer range is the powerful Olivetti M24.

Mr. Mike Wilson, Managing Director of DSE when interviewed by Gareth Powell from The Sydney Morning Herald explained the move into the professional market saying , "When the decision was made to go up market and the agreement signed with Olivetti, the criteria was that we carry a product that would beat the IBM - type on its merits rather than price. Price is not the factor but features and benefits are".

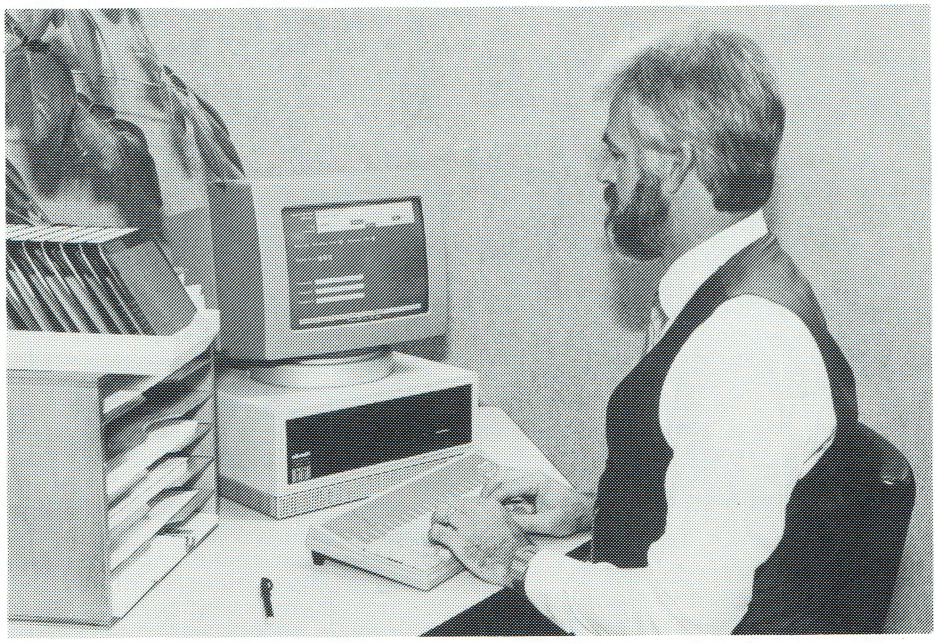
"Our Computer Sales and Support group", continued Mr. Wilson, "apart from supporting our stores with hotlines and bulletin boards, also conduct training for our specialists in our 15 Computerstop stores, Additionally, they have the ability to sell directly in to vertical markets"

DSE computer specialists (pictured right) attended extensive training programs through Olivetti's comprehensive facilities in each state.

**Listed are some of the superior features the M24 has to offer:-**

a. True 16 bit microprocessor running at 8 MHz.
b. Fully expandable with a 7 slot expan sion Bus.
c. Super high resolution graphics with 640 × 400 Pixel resolution.
d. XT Version available.
e. Service nationwide with full 6 months warranty by Olivetti Australia.
f. Runs virtually all industry standard software including Lotus, Symphony, Framework, Open Access, Microsoft Word, Chart etc. etc.

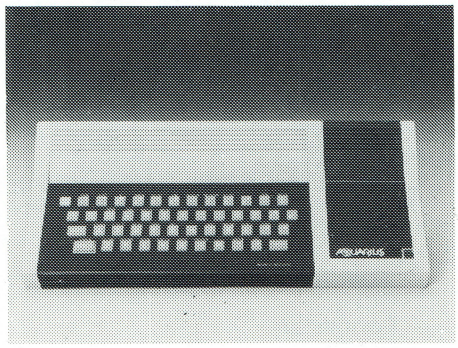
The Olivetti - AT & T M24 is certainly the computer for the small business per sonal computer buyer.



*The new Olivetti - AT & T M24, ideal for business applications.*

# 2. AQUARIUS

The Aquarius, our new low end home computer is packed with features you would expect on many larger, more



expensive machines. The Aquarius runs in full colour on your home T.V. set and is expandable to a fully working 32K computer system. Just plug in extra peripherals and go.

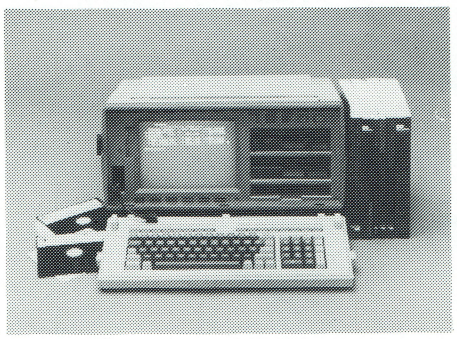
# 3. VZ-300

At last the bigger more powerful brother to the VZ-200 has arrived.

The VZ-200, with its staggering sales success (over 30,000 units sold) needs no introduction — with this success behind it the more versatile and powerful VZ-300 has an assured future.

**The main features of this new model are:**

1. Full software compatibility with the VZ-200
2. 18K standard user RAM
3. Full size keyboard
4. Optional disk drive interface



# 4. BONDWELL 14 PORTABLE

Our entry into this popular portable market has really stirred much interest within the industry and the Bondwell 14 was recently selected as a finalist in the Your Computer Magazine, Computer of the Year Awards.

This versatile CPM portable offers outstanding value for money at $2495.

**Just some of the advanced features are:**

1. CPM 3.0 operating system giving access to virtually thousands of quality software programs.
2. High quality "Bondwell" software
   Wordstar and Mailmerge
   Calcstar
   Reportstar
   Datastar
3. Twin 360K disk drives
4. Two serial and one parallel (printer ports)

From just these features it's easy to see the Bondwell 14 becoming the standard by which all portables will be measured.

**ANOTHER FIRST FOR DSE AND NEW ZEALAND:-**

Computer buffs are now able to receive new software programmes via commercial radio. DSE in conjuction with Radio New Zealand are pioneering this venture — the very first commercial application of it's kind in the Southern Hemisphere — on 26 radio stations across New Zealand.

The General Manager of DSE in New Zealand John Gourley said, "This new concept means that computer programmes will be available FREE for transfer from cassette via the airwaves".

There is a nationwide Computer Club incorporated into "The Tonight Show", with computer news and an on going competition. The radio programmes on computer are being broadcast on Monday and Tuesday evenings, and the Telesoftware broadcast goes out in the form of audio tones at 3.30 on Wednesday mornings. The selected computer programme becomes the winning entry of the week, and receives a $NZ100.00 prize from DSE.

DSE also provides two overall annual prizes The "Computer Educator of the Year" award aims to encourage the use & understanding of computers in education, and the winner receives a cash prize of NZ $2000.00 & $NZ 3,000.00 of equipment. An equivalent prize is offered to the best of the year's weekly winners.

## REVIEW.
# Perfect Writer Version 2 - Paul Beaver

**COMPUTER PRODUCTS CO-ORDINATOR**

As a person who produces long documents and user guides I was always on the lookout for any program that would ease the task of organising a long document.

I was first attracted to the first version of the Perfect suite of programmes by Perfect Writer. Just about any word processor will allow you to easily enter any text that you may wish to create. Most allow you to change text around with a varying degree of ease but that's as far as they go.

Only a very few of the word processing programmes available today for micros will actually help you with the layout of your document beyond simple pagination. Perfect Writer on the other hand has a full suite of commands to help in the setting up of the appearance of your document. For example to create a chapter in a long document you use a single command (@CHAPTER). When the document is printed this command will cause the programme to start a new page. At the top of the page it will place the number of the chapter, and your chapter title — both centered and with your title boldfaced. It will also print your chapter title and the number of the page it occurs on in a table of contents that it automatically creates.

There are just over thirty of these layout commands, including commands to assist in the layout of lists of items, numbered and unnumbered sectioning, the typestyle used, and even help to produce an index. There is a command that will change the standard layout caused by some of these commands to allow you to customise what they will do for you.

However with all these extra commands came extra complexity. The one drawback of Perfect Writer version 1 was the number of commands used. Unless you were using it every day you often had to refer to your manual to find the correct command.

## Enter Perfect Writer Version 2

With the new release of Perfect Writer comes a new standard of ease-of-use in a word processor. The same powerful command set that was available to you in Version 1 has been carried over to Version 2. However, they are now presented to you in the form of a series of "pop-up" menus that appear on the screen when you press the "ESC" key.

These menus are linked into a "tree" of commands in a similiar manner to the way Lotus 1-2-3 presents its commands. For example if you select the Documents option from the main menu you are presented with a second menu listing all the commands that relate to documents (read from disk, save to disk, print etc). If you are confused by any of the options that are presented to you in a menu all you have to do is hit the "?" key and a help screen will appear that explains each of the options.

One particularly nice feature of these "pop-up" menus is that they always appear near to but not covering the position of the cursor. This means that the commands are presented to you right where you are working. You do not have to take your eyes from what you are doing to search the screen for the command prompt. The menus and the on screen help that is associated with them makes this an extremely easy programme for the beginner or the occasional user.

The more advanced user or those that are distracted by the menus appearing over their text can set a delay of 1-9 seconds between when the "ESC" key has been pushed and the appearance of the menus. This allows the user to execute a command without having the menu appear. If you hesitate long enough for the delay time to pass then the current menu will appear to remind you where you are.

The programme that I was given for this review was configured to use the Challenger/IBM keyboard layout with the cursor control and function keys all being used. The implementation of these keys is good enough to allow you to use the word processor the same way you would use other word processors, as a "smart"

# Perfect Writer Version 2.

## (Continued)

typewriter. Doing simple tasks such as entering and editing your documents. Saving the final results to disk and then printing it all without ever having to call up one of the command menus! This is something that will endear this programme to the first time user as they will be able to start using this word processor immediately, and then as their experience increases, gradually add to the repetoire of commands used. The implentation of the function keys is particularly good, giving you 20 of the most commonly used commands without having to go through the menu tree.

In addition to the spelling checker that was included with version 1 of Perfect Writer, version 2 has a thesaurus included at no extra charge. This allows you to choose from around 50,000 entries, and select one of the synonyms presented on the screen.

All the features of version 1 have been passed on to its successor. You can have up to seven different documents in memory at once and display two of them on the screen at once. Transferring text between different documents is as easy as moving it around a single document.

There is the facility for extensive "boilerplating" of form letters including the automatic selection of text according to category. This means that you can produce a letter made up of previously typed paragraphs and have only certain paragraphs printed in certain letters.

Perfect Writer can also be used with Perfect Filer to merge a list of names and addresses with a form letter. Spreadsheets produced on Perfect Calc can also be integrated within documents using Writer.

Supplied on the disks provided with Perfect Writer are a series of lessons and demonstrations of the various commands and functions. This and the extensive examples outlined in the manuals will provide the beginner with an easy introduction to word processing and give the experienced a quick way to become familiar with the commands of the package. Both beginner and experienced WP user should be able to start producing results virtually as soon as they sit down to use the programme fo the first time.

And finally Perfect Writer stores and retrieves its files in standard ASCII format so it can be used as an editor to a large variety of different programmes from PASCAL to DBASE II/III.

The only slightly negative comment that I have to make is that with so rich a command tree you may have to pass through as many as three menus to get to the command that you wish to use. However the menus are set out in such a manner as to allow you easy access to the most frequently used functions. It is difficult to conceive of a more convenient way of accessing such a large number of commands. There have been some steps taken to reduce this problem with a "short cut" method into each of the major menus and single key repetition of the last command used.

# SALES AND SUPPORT

Dick Smith Electronic computers have achieved high recognition in the market place. DSE has sold over 30,000 VZ-200s and many thousands of System 80s, Sorcerers and Wizzards.

Our newer, more powerful products have progressively moved Dick Smith Electronics from the home entertainment, and basic learning areas into the commercial, business and serious educational markets with products like the Cat, and Challenger — both released mid 1984 — followed by the portable Bondwell 14 in November, and the Mk II Challenger in February 1985.

The recent addition of the Olivetti M21 and M24 to our range has had several interesting results. First and foremost, it has shown the market place that Dick Smith Electronics is a fully fledged, legitimate supplier of business standard computers and is not one of the many "here today gone tomorrow" entrepreneurs. Our continuance with the Cat, Challenger and Bondwell also assures customers/prospects of our commitments to these products.

At Dick Smith Electronics we pride ourselves on our length of product support. We provide both hardware and software support as long as is possible. Whilst we are primarily a hardware supplier we provide more extensive software support than many hardware and software houses.

Our Computer Sales and Support Division assists the customer by mail (approximately 20-30 letters per week), by telephone (approximately 50-60 calls per day on the hotline) and through our Dick Smith Electronic Bulletin Board (approximately 50 connections per day). Computer Sales and Support also spends many hours a week investigating and testing new software and hardware products.

For new owners of Cat, Challenger, Bondwell and Olivetti there is available a free half-day introductory course in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide.

Dick Smith Electronics is totally committed to supporting its customers through Computer Sales and Support.

# TRAINING •

## COMPUTER EDUCATION

Many new Cat owners and an increasing number of new Challenger owners have come to grips with their machines at Applied Computer Science. Following the success of the half-day introductory course and extended courses available for popular software, ACS are now education agents for DSE Cats, Challengers, Bondwells and Olivetti machines. At present, courses are offered in Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide. There is a free half-day introductory course and a wide range of options at courses at various prices available for the most popular software.

For the Cat, word processing with Sandy's word processor, and spreadsheet with Visicalc are the most popular.

For both the Challenger and the Olivetti the available courses include the "Perfect" software and "Lotus 1-2-3." Education and installation is available for the Olibiz accounting software which runs on the Olivetti.

For the Bondwell there are currently courses available on Wordstar and Calcstar.

In a survey of Australian business, lack of suitable education was a major reason for not buying a computer.

For DSE, education is a critical part of customer support.

At DSE we recognise that education is the key to the potential of any computer. For further information about courses contact your nearest Dick Smith Electronics store or :

Marilyn Cross M.A.
Applied Computer Science
Ground Floor
13 Spring Street
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067

Phone: 419-5581

Country and interstate toll-free number (008) 226 6738

# USERS GROUPS

## CHALLENGER USERS GROUP (SYDNEY)

The first meeting of the Challenger User Group was held on the 4th December, at A.C.S.,Ground Floor 13 Spring Street, Chatswood, Sydney. NSW. Ph:
Phone: (02) 419 5581

There was a wide cross section of members within the group, of the 23 members the ages ranged from early 20's to late 50's and two ladies were present. Most required their Challengers for business uses but the hobbyist is very welcome.

The group aims to provide help to all the members with Perfect Software, Public Domain Software and Commercial Software. As well as new products, displays and assistance with user programs.

The yearly subscription for the User Group is only $25.00. Dick Smith Electronics is also supplying a wide range of public domain software so bring along plenty of blank discs.

Don't forget 2nd Tuesday Monthly 7-9 pm.

## CHALLENGER USERS GROUP (VICTORIA)

Over the past 4 months, there has been a small Challenger User Group meeting at private houses of members in Melbourne. At the moment there is no joining fee, but this will change when the group gets larger.

**The topics of discussion to date have been:**

1. DBase II
2. Modems and Data Base access
3. Difficulties users have had with software
4. Various innovative uses for the computer
5. Anything of interest regarding computers.

Any person who is a Challenger user/owner is more than welcome to go along to these meetings. Any enquires are to be directed to S, Wagen (03) 605 2222

## CAT USERS GROUP

On the 27th November, a Users Group was formed for the Cat Computer. The meetings are to be held at A.C.S., Ground Floor 13 Spring Street, Chatswood. Sydney NSW. Ph: (02) 419 5581.

At the first meeting, the reasons and aims of the group were decided. Some of these are short term plans and others long term. They are listed below.

1. The overall objective of the Cat User Group is to provide the users mutual assistance in their ability to use the Cat Computer.
2. Access to public domain software — a large show of hands was for the education area of public software.
3. A need was expressed for users to be able to convert Apple programs to run on the Cat. Self help in this area is one of the long term projects of the group.
4. Development of programming skills in the Users is yet again a long term aim of the group.
5. Interest was shown for lessons in the use of some of the more common programs available for the Cat, Word Processors, Spreadsheets and Databases.
6. Regular demonstrations of new pro ducts.

The next meeting, a must for all Cat owners is 1st Tuesday, Monthly, 6-8 pm. $2.00 per meeting/ with $10 annual subscription.

## VZ-200 USERS GROUPS

**N.S.W.**

Alex Mitchell
15 Chesterfield Road,
Epping, 2121

Adam Fisher
P.O. Box 349
Edgecliffe, 2027

Rick Swancott
7 Little Street
Cambridge Park, 2750

**A.C.T.**

Nedad Stefanovic
19 Hosking Place.
Melba, 2615

**Victoria**

Wilfred Van Veen
118 Foot Street
Frankston, 3199

Luigi Chiodo
24 Don Street
Reservoir, 3073

**W.A.**

Steven Rosich
19 Elmhurst Way
Greenwood, 6024

**S.A.**

Bob Steer
22 Prince Street,
Port Pirie, 5540

John Walters
30 Seventh Avenue
Cheltenham, 5014

**Queensland**

Peter Gesch
12 Castle Street
Chinchilla, 4413

Troy Lockett
20 Alice Street,
Keoron, 4031

Anthony Smith
14 Hibbertia Court
Chatswood Hill, 4127

**N.T.**

Gordon Browell
7 Abbott Crescent
Malak, 5793

**New Zealand**

Stephen Leggat
Whitford Road R.D.I.
Auckland

G Dillon
P.O. Box 22-094
Christchurch

# "Why wasn't I warned?"

We are continually warned about the dangers of smoking tobacco. We are warned about the use of Alcohol, about Pornography, casual sex, speaking to strangers in Public Toilets and casting our clouts before May is out; but why, oh why, wasn't I warned about Computers?

Had my mother been aware of the existence of personal computers, I know that she would wisely have counselled me to think twice before sacrificing my peace of mind and all my leisure hours at the feet of such a fickle god. My father was aware of the "monsters" that filled whole floors at the Universities of Birmingham and Manchester, but he, simple soul that he is, never dreamed that one day, his baby son would become ensnared in the paraphanalia of Electronics, to which he scathingly referred as "a nest of snakes".

While personal computers continued to retail at $4000 — $5,000, I was safe. I could admire them from afar and knowingly speak of RAMS and BYTES, without ever having to demonstrate any ability, but then some well-meaning, but far from sane, executive introduced the VZ 200 and put personal computers within the reach of all and sundry.

My daughter spotted it first. Months ago, she had nailed me to the floor by asking, "Dad, if you could afford it, would you buy a computer?" Magnanimously, and believing myself to be safe, I had answered as would any loving father, with tongue in cheek and fingers crossed, "Of course, dearest child." Thus committed, it only remained for Dick Smith Electronics to deliver the "Coup de Grace". It was quickly noted and bought before my eyes.

I forget the exact sum of money that changed hands. It was easy to forget, being less than $200, but I became the owner of a VZ-200, a cassette machine, an extended memory, some manuals and various cassettes. For a few days, I was subject to the headiness of possession, but then I was foolish enough to try it out.

Merely running the demo tape, convinced me that my old black and white 'Telly', given to me by another well-meaning idiot, was obsolete. Overnight, my investment trebled and we purchased a colour Television set.

I remember the next milestone with shame every time I sit down in front of the keyboard. From one of the manuals I typed in the programme for 'Crystal Spectacular'. I am not a skillful typist, as the Editor will no doubt confirm, and it took me a long time. Eventually, I was satisfied that I had got it right and the whole family gathered round to witness Dad's latest triumph of 'mind over matter'. I had managed to get the programme on to tape O.K. and now managed to feed it back into the computer. The family were duly impressed, but when I commanded it to "RUN", having deliberately built up an atmosphere of tension and excitment, to the stage where the dog was howling hysterically and scratching at the door, then a partial column of 'Crystals' appeared on the screen and the whole business ceased.

The family would not be appeased by such platitudes as, "It often does that, they tell me." and "They're still in their infancy, you know." They demanded proof that Father had indeed triumphed again in our ages-old conflict of mind over matter. No proof was forthcoming, or even fifthcoming. The children were sent smirking to bed and I spent the midnight oil examining and re-examining the original programme in the manual and comparing it with the version I had typed into the VZ-200. I was totally convinced that they were identical.

It would seem, so my local store Manager assures me, that at Head Office, they have some specialists.

I appealed to them to correct their manual so that other buyers, perhaps not so blessed as I with grey cells, would not have to flounder on the rocks of others' carelessness. Back came a letter, accompanied by a cassette (which produced lovely crystals, 'ad nauseum') pointing out that somewhere in the middle, I had typed 'I', instead of '1'.

Obviously, I was not ready for such advanced programmes yet, so I turned my attention to "Checkers". Selecting Level 1, I soundly thrashed the Computer, tried again, thrashed it again and flushed with success, selected Level 2. I have yet to win a game at Level 2. in spite of the fact that my paternal grandfather was Checkers champion of Bilston Working Mens Club for both years that they ran the championship. The other entrant, his cousin, Edgar was also quite good, I am told.

Currently, I am wrestling with "Air Traffic Controller." I suspect that there may be more to computing than meets the eye. I rather suspect also, that the aircraft that approach MY airport, are actually piloted by malignant microbes, bent on bringing about my ultimate insanity. MY aircraft do not obey my commands to decrease height when coming in to land. Neither do they change direction when instructed to do so. I have tried typing in "Please" after the command, to no avail. The aircraft continues inexorably on, to disappear over the edge of the screen to oblivion or some 'Bermudan Triangle' of tangled wires and Silicon Chips.

You're right! I should give it up. But since I retired from the work-force; after my nervous break-down that was; my Doctor tells me I need the therapeutic effect of computing. It's all right for him, he's got a Challenger.

**Eric S. Watson.**

DICK SMITH ELECTRONICS
PTY LTD
Head Office: P.O. Box 321 North Ryde, 2113, NSW. Ph: (02) 888 3200

# BULLETIN BOARD

## BULLETIN BOARD

The bulletin board configuration is as follows:

OLIVETTI M21

DSE 10 MEGABYTE HARD DISK

300 BAUD MODEM

CPA-80 DOT MATRIX PRINTER

After extensive testing the BBS is now up and running and we are unlikely to experience any new problems.

The bulletin board is accessible to any system that uses ASCII.

The system parameters are:
300 baud, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, no parity.

## CONNECTING TO THE BULLETIN BOARD WITH THE CAT

Connect the modem to the CAT via the RS232C interface. Turn the computer on and press "Reset" if you have disk drives. Now from the BASIC prompt type "IN#2". Now type "CTRL-A", "CTRL-F". This sets up for transmit and receive. Now set the modem to phone and originate. Next, dial the number, once you receive the tone switch over to modem and press the RETURN key a few times. You will now have the bulletin board messages and instructions appear on your screen.

## CONNECTING TO THE BULLETIN BOARD WITH CHALLENGER & OLIVETTI

Set your Challenger or Olivetti communication program to the right parameters as shown above. The cable should be connected as 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 7-7, 8-8. This is the standard set-up for Challenger or Olivetti to a modem. Now dial the bulletin board on phone and originate and flick the switch over to modem once you hear the tone. Hit RETURN a few times and you should be connected.

## CONNECTING TO THE BULLETIN BOARD WITH BONDWELL 14

Set up your program to use the parameters that have been specified above. Now select terminal mode for your program. Dial the bulletin board with your modem set to phone and originate. Once you receive the tone switch to modem and press RETURN a few times to get carrier.

At the moment there are some 200 files on the bulletin board. To see the current listing at any time dial the bulletin board and download the xferlist file.

Also, the bulletin board offers a computer ordering system for the holders of Visa, Mastercard and Bankcard. The customer is required to enter his or her name, credit card number, delivery address, type of delivery, CAT.# and quantity and the goods will be despatched through our speedy D.S.XPRESS mail order service. The phone number for this service is still (008) 887 2276

If you have any problems setting up your system contact Paul Jones on 888 3200 or directly on 888 2002.

PAUL JONES
COMPUTER SALES & SUPPORT

## QUESTION TIME

**CAT**

1. How can I start up a program without turning off my computer?
Starting up a program when the machine has already been turned on is called giving the computer a "warm boot". Providing the previous program has been finished and the cursor is showing, the following command will "boot" the disk:

"PR#6 RETURN"

**CHALLENGER**

2. How can I save a program written in BASIC? Save "name of program", e.g. save "program".

**This space is yours — We look forward to your questions in the next issue.**

**Write to:-**
**The Editor**
**COMPUT**
**P.O. Box 321, North Ryde.**

Comput has certainly found a place amongst our customers. After just 2 issues, our distribution list is in the thousands!

To contain our mailing costs, and to provide a convenient alternative, future issues will be available in our stores to those readers who live near a Dick Smith Electronics Store.

Copies will continue to be mailed to readers who do not have easy access to our Stores. If you find that it is not convenient for you to pick up Comput at a DSE Store, then drop us a note and we will be pleased to restore you to our mailing list.

The Editor.